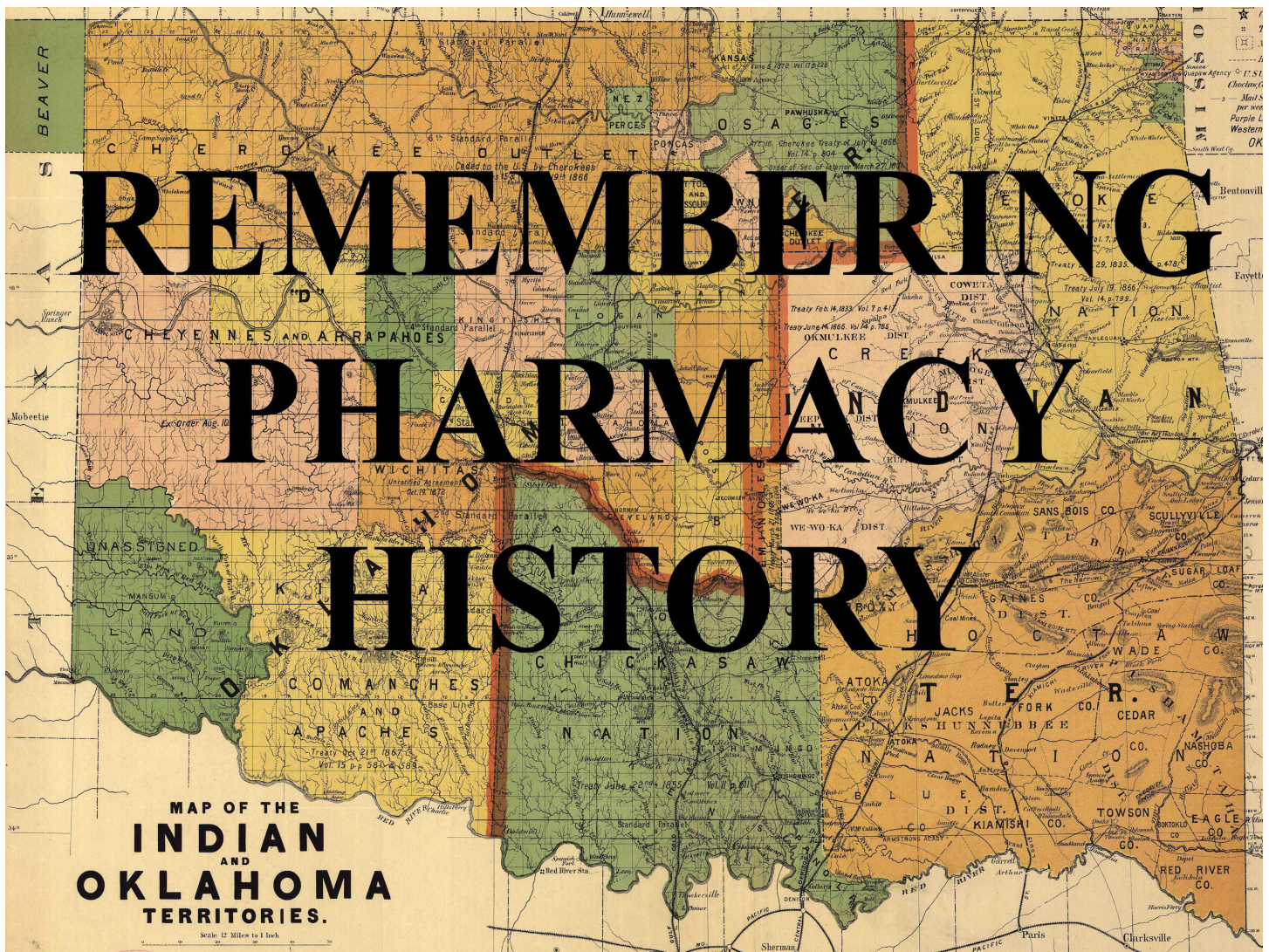


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PHARMACISTS OF OKLAHOMA TERRITORY Fred Joseph Amphlett and James Franklin Ayars



*Cover Logo based on an
1892 map of Indian and
Oklahoma Territories in the
United States Library of
Congress.*

PHARMACISTS OF OKLAHOMA TERRITORY

Fred Joseph Amphlett and James Franklin Ayars

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Fred Joseph Amphlett

Almost exactly one year after the 1901 founding of the new town of Apache in Oklahoma Territory, Fred Joseph Amphlett announced that he would establish a new drug store there. The store opened in January of 1903.

Fred was born in Jackson, Michigan, in June of 1870. His father Thomas L. and mother Ann (Owen) had been married in Akron, Ohio, before settling in Michigan. Thomas was born in New York in February, 1833. His parents had immigrated from England. His wife Ann was born in Wales in September of 1833 and came to the United States with her parents in 1843. Thomas L. Amphlett was a grocer in Jackson in 1870, but his pottery-making skills soon led him to establish a pottery works in Ionia, Michigan, located between Lansing and Grand Rapids. After 1881, when the Chicago and North Western Railroad was built westward from Chicago, Thomas moved his family to Detroit township, close to Aberdeen, Dakota Territory. They were among the early settlers of the region that eventually became part of the state of South Dakota.

Fred received part of his education in South Dakota, but was one of the Amphlett family members who began migrating from South Dakota to Chicago in about 1890. In the Hyde Park District of Chicago, two of the Amphlett brothers, Fred J. and Thomas G., became established in the drug business. They both attended the Chicago School of Pharmacy in the early 1890s and soon started the Amphlett drug store at Sixty Third Street and Stony Island Avenue.

In Chicago, Fred met Jessie May Cook, whom he married on November 28, 1894. The first born of their children, Owen Morgan, was born in Chicago on December 9, 1897. Theodore, the second child of Fred and Jessie,

F. J. AMPHLETT

Formerly of Chicago will open up new stock of Drugs, Paints, Oils, Wall paper, etc. In Ed Kell's building, next to Welsh Bros, about Dec. 15th, or as soon as the building is completed. Watch for further announcements,

Notice of the coming of F. J. Amphlett's new drug store in Apache, Oklahoma Territory. From The Week's Review (Apache), October 17, 1902.



Apache, Oklahoma Territory, street scene, ca. 1907, showing location of Fred Amphlett's drug store. From the author's collection.



Apache, Oklahoma, corner built in 1908 by Fred Amphlett next to the original site of his drug store. Photograph taken by the author, 2009.



Owen Morgan Amphlett, 1933. From ODL files.

was born on their wedding anniversary day, November 28, 1901.

Shortly after Theodore's birth, Fred began to explore the possibilities of putting in a drug store in one of the newly opened towns of Oklahoma Territory. His focus was on Apache, where he moved the family and started a drug store in 1903. His brother, Thomas, stayed behind to operate their drug store in Chicago while Fred became the adventurer.

On July 14, soon after opening the drug store in Apache, Fred took the pharmacy examination given in Oklahoma City by the Oklahoma Territory Board of Pharmacy. He passed and was issued license number 500 by the board. He was later given the same number by the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy.

Fred and his family were well-known and well-liked in Apache, being actively involved in community affairs. Fred held offices in the Apache Commercial Club and was president of the Apache Red Cross Carnival in 1918. Fred

and Jessie were both very active in the Red Cross, especially during the World War I years.

The saloon on the corner next to Amphlett's drug store was forced out of business by prohibition laws enacted by the new state of Oklahoma in 1907. Fred bought the lot and, in 1908, erected on it a building that has become iconic for the town of Apache.

In early 1917, the Amphlett brothers bought a drug store in Enid from Eugene Watrous. In March and April, Fred spent several weeks in Enid attending to the new business. However, Fred saw other available opportunities. By December of that year, the store in Enid was sold to the Sturgeon Drug Company of Ames, Oklahoma. The Amphletts were preparing to move to Lawton.

Brother Tom, while continuing to manage the Amphlett Brothers drug store in Chicago, made frequent visits to Apache. In May of 1917, he "motored" to Lawton with Fred, Jessie, and Owen. This trip was a prelude to the purchase of the Jones Brothers drug store there. About this time, the Amphletts also created a new logo that would be used for the Apache store as well as for the soon-to-be A & B Drug Store in Lawton. The name of the store was said to have been an acronym for "Always Best," but also stood for "Amphlett Brothers."

A partner in the new venture was R. I. Belcher, a pharmacist who had worked at the Amphlett Brothers Drug Store in Enid. Belcher moved to Apache after the Enid store was sold and ultimately ended up as a partner with the Fred Amphlett in the A & B store in Lawton.

Shortly before the Amphletts moved to Lawton, Owen answered the call to arms by becoming a member of the Army Aviation



Logo used by Amphlett Brothers Drug Store in Apache as well as in Lawton. From *The Week's Review (Apache)*, July 13, 1917.

Corp. He entered aerial training at Camp Travis, San Antonio, Texas, and was sent to France in early 1918.

In September of 1918, R. T. Carter of Carnegie bought an interest in the Amphlett Drug at Apache. In December of that year, Fred Amphlett and family moved to Lawton and Carter eventually became sole owner of the store in Apache.

Owen returned from France in 1919 and started learning pharmacy in the A & B Drug Store in Lawton on August 1 of that year. By the first of January, 1921, he was compounding and filling prescriptions written by local physicians. On June 15, 1921, he married Alice Short in Lawton. The couple had a daughter, Barbara Jo, who married Robert Stafford in 1947.

In June of 1928, Owen's brother Ted, a draftsman, married Dorothy Grace Quinette in Lawton and the couple moved to California. By this time, Owen had become part owner in A & B Drug. Fred and Jessie also moved to California, leaving the operation of the store to Owen. Fred died at his home in Los Angeles on December 11, 1943. Jessie died there on July 12, 1947. Both are buried in Fairview Cemetery in Apache. Ted also died in California in 1990.

ANNOUNCEMENT!



We wish to announce, that after seventeen and one half years of successful operation of the Jones Brothers drug store in this city, Jones Brothers have sold out their drug business to Messrs. Amphlett and Belcher of Apache and Enid who will conduct it along the same efficient lines it has been operated under in the past.

The store will be renamed the A. and B Drug company and the name not only stands for Amphlett and Belcher, but for "Always Best" which is our slogan.

The general public is cordially invited to make the A. and B. store, their headquarters, while in the shopping district. Use our telephone, leave parcels and take advantage of any other accommodations which the store has to offer. Meet your friends at our store, and make the A. and B. Store your store.

ALWAYS BEST—In Service.

ALWAYS BEST—In Quality.

ALWAYS BEST—In Value.



A. and B. Drug Company

Announcement that Amphlett bought the Jones Brothers Drug in Lawton. From The Lawton News, January 27, 1918.



A-B Drug Store, 401 D Avenue, Lawton, ca. 1965. From Southwest Oklahoma Genealogical Society, Lawton, Oklahoma.

On July 7, 1933, Owen took the Oklahoma pharmacy board examination for an “undergraduate certificate,” a so-called “red letter” license to practice pharmacy. These certificates were made available by the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy to those who did not graduate from a school of pharmacy, but had eight years of experience in compounding prescriptions and passed the board examination. Owen qualified and passed the examination on July 17, 1933.

As he became more and more successful in pharmacy, Owen began to focus his attention on other pursuits. His interest in horses was shared by his daughter Barbara Jo and the two often attended and actively participated in horse shows around the state.

Owen successfully operated the A & B Drug Store in Lawton until his death in Lawton on March 22, 1964, at age 66. He had participated in many organizations in Lawton, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Masonic Lodge 183. He was a member of the board of directors of the Lawton Retail Merchants Association and of the first Lawton Country Club Association, formed in 1946. He was also a member of the Fort Sill-Lawton Chess Club.

James Franklin Ayars

After engaging in the drug business in Kansas and in Oklahoma Territory, James Franklin Ayars was commonly referred to as “Doc.” Friends called him Jim. An adventurer and pioneer, he was widely respected in each of the communities in which he settled.

Jim’s parents, Jephtha and Margaret (Thomas) Ayars, were living in Monticello, Lewis County, Missouri, when he was born on December 16, 1841. Jephtha had moved there from Cumberland County, New Jersey, and worked as a



James Franklin Ayars with wife Katherine and six daughters. From left to right: row 1 - Jim, Kate, and Dolly; row 2 - Jimmie, Minnie, and Maud; row 3 - Grace and Fannie. From John K. Matthews.



Reliable Prescriptions Reliably Filled

is a phrase containing every "if," "and" and "but" of the policy of our Prescription Department. Whatever your doctor orders for you, that you will get if his prescription is placed in our hands. Nothing will be missing, naught will be substituted for some drug or chemical we have not in stock. Spite of our accuracy and care we do not charge excessively. Ask your friends and neighbors about our way of putting up prescriptions—everything else in the drug line, too,

J. F. Ayars.
Successors to Reeder's Pharmacy

Advertisement by J. F. Ayars after he purchased Reeder's Pharmacy in Tulsa. From The Tulsa Daily World, December 21, 1905.

contractor and builder. It was in Missouri that Jephtha met and married Margaret, a daughter of James W. Thomas, who came to the new territory from Kentucky with his friend Daniel Boone.

In 1845, Jephtha and Margaret moved the family to Grant County, Wisconsin Territory. Jim grew up in this far southwestern corner of the state of Wisconsin, in Potosi Township along the Mississippi River. Most of his formal education was obtained in the nearby town of Lancaster.

In the summer of 1861, shortly after the outbreak of the American Civil War, Jim joined the Union Army. His unit, the Tenth Wisconsin Infantry, Company F, mustered out of Milwaukee in October of that year. He participated in his unit's battles in many places, including Vicksburg, where he was mustered out with an honorable discharge in June of 1865. In the interim, he was injured and blinded in one eye.

Jim's injury did not hamper his adventuresome spirit. He moved to Kansas after being discharged and worked for a time as a clerk in the quartermaster's department at Fort Riley. In 1866, he married Catherine (Kate) Mitchell in Junction City. Kate had been born in Pennsylvania in 1847 and moved to Kansas with her family. The new couple soon located in Ellsworth, claimed by some to be the "wickedest" cowtown in Kansas. In Ellsworth, Jim and Kate built a residence, called the "Ayars House," that was also used as a hotel during the early days when the town was being built.

Shortly before 1870, Jim and Kate moved away from Ellsworth and established a farm on Clark's Creek, south of Junction City. This would be their residence until the early 1880s when Jim decided to enter the drug business in Junction City. Meanwhile, he undertook mining ventures in Colorado and South Dakota, returning to Kansas intermittently to attend to his agricultural interests.

In 1881, Jim and family moved into Junction City where he became a partner with G. I. Bowers in a drug store, known as Bowers & Ayars. That store opened on February 9, 1882, with a stock worth about \$4,800. At this point, Jim began to learn about pharmacy. In 1884, he joined the Kansas Pharmaceutical Association and helped



Ayars Drug Store, Tulsa, 1904, with J. F. Ayars standing at right. From Museum of Pioneer History, Chandler, Oklahoma.

the Kansas legislature pass a pharmacy law for the state in 1885. In Junction City, Jim was probate judge, a member of the city council, and acting mayor. He also joined the Masonic Lodge in Junction City.

Jim sold his interest in the drug store in Junction City before 1889, when he established a real estate office in partnership with C. H. Stowe in the new town of Guthrie, located in the so-called “unassigned lands” of Indian Territory. This portion of Indian Territory became Oklahoma Territory in 1890. Jim also staked a claim a mile and a half north of town. While in Guthrie, Jim operated a drug store which he sold in January of 1892 in order to move to the new town of Chandler. He had become acquainted in Guthrie with Alexander Miller McElhinney and Albert Daniel Wright, both of whom established drug stores in early-day Chandler. His initial employment in Chandler was at McElhinney’s Drug Store, serving as manager while the proprietor wrapped up his business in Guthrie.

On August 20, 1890, Jim joined the newly organized Oklahoma Territory Pharmaceutical Association and helped pass the pharmacy law enacted later that year. On Saturday, February 28, 1891, Jim applied for registration as a pharmacist under the new law for Oklahoma Territory, paid the \$3.00 fee, and was issued license number 39. After statehood, he was issued license number 1102 by the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy.

In early February, 1892, Jim was prepared to move into his own drug store on South Manvel Avenue in Chandler. While operating his own drug store in town, Jim became extensively involved in local affairs. In March of 1892, he was appointed “Weather Observer” for county A (eventually Lincoln County) by the Department of Agriculture and provided weekly reports about rainfall amounts as well as minimum and maximum temperatures. In April of that year, he was given credit for compiling materials resulting in the incorporation of Chandler. During his time in Chandler, he became a member of the local Knights of Pythias and of the Chandler Post of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). As a member of the Republican Party, he was successful in being elected to the Chandler City Council and as Lincoln County Treasurer in 1898. Additionally, he served as clerk of the Chandler School Board for two years and as president of the Chandler Commercial Club. In the latter capacity, Jim was instrumental in interesting the Fort Smith and Western Railroad in building a line through Chandler.

In 1902, Jim moved away from Chandler and organized the First National Bank at Prague. In 1904, he moved to

Tulsa and purchased Reeder's Pharmacy, owned by Charles Lafayette Reeder. Jim continued his community involvement in Tulsa, becoming president in 1906 of the Business Mens Association. He also continued his activity in the GAR, serving as Indian Territory Department Commander in 1906. In 1909, Jim retired and sold the drug store in Tulsa to J. Z. Briggs and G. D. Kendall.

Jim died in Tulsa on October 28, 1916. Kate died there on December 25, 1928. Both are buried in Highland Cemetery, Junction City, KS.

Acknowledgements

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Bibliographic

Information and images for these biographies were collected from many sources, including files at the Oklahoma Pharmacists Association (OPhA) office in Oklahoma City as well as various issues of The Disseminator, The NARD Journal, Southern Pharmaceutical Journal, The National Druggist, The Western Druggist, and newspapers from Aberdeen, South Dakota; Chicago, Illinois; and Tulsa, Apache, Lawton, Chandler, and Guthrie, Oklahoma. Additional biographical information for Fred Joseph Amphlett was found in Richard Illenden Bonner, Editor, Memoirs of Lenawee County, Michigan, Volume 2. (Madison, WI, Western Historical Association, 1909): 22. Biographical information for James Franklin Ayars was also obtained from John K. Matthews as well as from Museum of Pioneer History, Chandler, Oklahoma, and Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma (Chicago, Chapman Publishing Company, 1901): 1176-1177. United States census records have provided valuable family-related data. The ERA and Hayes Druggists directories have been used as aids to trace pharmacy locations in Oklahoma. Especially beneficial for biographical information have been pharmacist applications for licensure as well as records of the Oklahoma Territory, Indian Territory, and Oklahoma State Boards of Pharmacy located in the Archives and Records Division of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL).